



They cut it down, and where the pitch-black aisles
Of forest night had hid eternal things,
They scal'd the sky with tow'rs and marble piles
To make a city for their revellings.

White and amazing to the lands around
That wondrous wealth of domes and turrets rose;
Crystal and ivory, sublimely crown'd
With pinnacles that bore unmelting snows.

And through its halls the pipe and sistrum rang,
While wine and riot brought their scarlet stains;
Never a voice of elder marvels sang,
Nor any eye call'd up the hills and plains.

Thus down the years, till on one purple night
A drunken minstrel in his careless verse
Spoke the vile words that should not see the light,
And stirr'd the shadows of an ancient curse.

Forests may fall, but not the dusk they shield;
So on the spot where that proud city stood,
The shuddering dawn no single stone reveal'd,
But fled the blackness of a primal wood.

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